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CHIEF OF *Spies*

When President Carter nominated Admiral Stansfield Turner to direct the Central Intelligence Agency in 1977, the Washington experts thought they had the career officer figured out. Sure, they conceded, he was bright, sophisticated, polished. And yes, they went on to agree, he certainly *looked* the part.

But was he tough enough? Some questioned whether he possessed the qualities to tame an agency that had been under fire in the press and investigated by Congress for illegal activities. Rather than run the "rogue elephant," as the agency had come to be known, it would run him, critics feared. He was, they contended, too nice. "[He] is not Billy Mitchell," the *New Republic* lamented. "For his many strengths, he remains very much a man of the system."

The *New Republic* needn't have worried. Army Brigadier General Billy Mitchell always had been one of Turner's heroes. Like Mitchell—who was court-martialed in 1925 for championing the cause of air power in heretical ways—Turner also relished dissenting from conventional military viewpoints.

Moreover, as part of the team assembled by Admiral Elmo (Bud) Zumwalt Jr., Chief of Naval Operations from 1970 through 1974, he helped the contentious Zumwalt modernize an aging, tradition-bound—and often resistant—Navy. Along the way, Zumwalt dubbed Turner his "resident S.O.B.," his devil's advocate.

As CIA director, Turner remained in character. Rather than function as just another figurehead, a trap into which some directors reportedly had fallen, Turner did what few people expected: *He* turned out to be the maverick.

For example, he reasserted the director's authority over the so-called "old boy" network that long had dominated the agency. Consisting of the top men of the CIA's three major operational branches—espionage, analysis and technical development and operation—that network functioned very nearly as a closed and independent fiefdom, apparently resisting all outside interference. Including, incidentally, that of the CIA director himself.

All of that changed under Turner. During the ensuing four years, he reinstated, on a limited basis, "covert"-type intelligence operations (an activity that had fallen into disuse), took steps to open up the agency to greater Congressional oversight, increased the role of technology in spying, and, in one abrupt and fiercely criticized stroke, slashed 820 job slots from the agency's espionage branch.

Such moves embittered a sizable portion of the intelligence work force. One ex-CIA man, John K. Greaney, likens Turner to a "Captain Queeg type" who was suspicious of the more experienced agency employees and ignored their advice. "He thought they were out to torpedo his ship," says Greaney, now executive director of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers (AFIO), a group of 3,200 ex-intelligence personnel. "The trouble with Turner," he adds, "is that he was an outsider who just didn't understand the workings of the intelligence community."

Nonsense, retorts Turner. Precisely because he was an outsider, he maintains, he often was better able to perceive the need for change in intelligence operations than entrenched agency veterans. "The 'old boys' tried to create a mystique around the idea of intelligence," he says, "and give the impression that only they could understand it. But it isn't that hard for an outsider to grasp."

By this time, you would think, the unseemly tussle between Admiral Turner and the old boys of the CIA would be ancient history. Not so. Five years after leaving "the company," as the CIA is amiably known in Washington, Turner remains embattled. Not as a top government official, but this time as a writer, lecturer and, most particularly, as a critic of America's current intelligence and military policies.

At 62, an age when most retired admirals are easing into lives of comfortable obscurity, Turner once again is departing from the usual pattern.

Still the outsider, and still the quintessential maverick, he very nearly is turning iconoclasm into a third career. For example, early in 1985 he published his first book, *Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition* (304 pages, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, $16.95). The book reflects Turner's worry that the agency he believes he helped reform and modernize in the late 1970s is backsliding—returning to the controversial ways that got it into trouble with Congress.

Gadfly though he may be, he is also, as the *New Republic* was at least partly right to suggest, a man of the system. If he were not, Turner probably would not be found sitting, along with many other retired admirals and generals, on the boards of giant corporations. Turner, for example, is a member of the board of directors of such firms as the Monsanto Chemical Company, the

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